

earned break and a confident and bright future.

I have been blessed to have extraordinary leadership on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and I am going to miss Brian and so many of the team.

I am not leaving the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, but I have maxed out, termed-out in terms of chairmanship or ranking member. So it is a different place for me, but I am still going to be involved with so many who continue to do good, strong things on the energy front.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL PAWLOWSKI

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, another individual who came to me through the energy front, if you will, is a gentleman by the name of Michael Pawlowski. Most of you who know me and know my chief of staff don't know that my chief of staff's name is actually Michael Pawlowski because nobody refers to him as that. They refer to him simply as "Fish"—no last name, just "Fish." And I think that is actually somewhat appropriate for my office, where we celebrate a lot of good things with fish. I was fortunate to be able to share some filets of salmon with some colleagues as Christmas appreciation, and I would say nothing says "thank you" more than fish.

This is now my opportunity to say thank you to my Fish.

Fish came to Washington, DC, back in 2015, when we brought him on to the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Again, all good things come through ENR. We brought him back to be senior policy adviser in 2015, and he served in that capacity until I brought him over to be my chief of staff in 2016. He has served me here in my personal office since that time.

Fish is an Alaskan through and through. His family has lived in Alaska for five generations. He was raised in Anchorage. He has worked for multiple State legislators. He has worked in our State government. He has worked on budget and energy policies. He was deputy commissioner of revenue. He has worked to help build up so many different energy projects—the Alaska LNG project. He served on the AIDEA board, on the Alaska Energy Authority.

He has been involved in so many different aspects of what is making our State move that when he first agreed to come back to Washington, DC, I figured I would be able to keep him back here for just a couple years. Somebody with this much potential, somebody with this much on the ball—how was I possibly going to be able to keep him here? I figured out how to do it—just make sure he could get back to Alaska for work throughout the summer so he could do the fishing that he really, really wants to do first and foremost.

But that is just the human, personal side of him. What Fish has provided me is a view towards relationships and

how we operate in business and professional relationships here in the Senate, working with different offices. He has worked to build relationships because he truly and genuinely cares about the people he is talking to. He is genuinely interested.

He has taken upon himself the mentoring of our youngest staff, more particularly. In the order that we have in many of the offices, you have levels of seniority, and oftentimes the younger staff, those who may have just graduated from college, come to Washington, DC, and they may be answering phones and they may be answering letters, but they don't feel like they have a real say in what is going on in the decisionmaking and are kind of out of the loop. And Fish—Fish decided that he was going to bring them into the loop with what he called "morning stand-ups." They were designed for the young legislative correspondents to come on in, and we will just kind of tell you what is going on. You can ask questions. We will talk about process. We will talk about issues. And they were not required meetings but more informational. I think now everybody comes to the morning stand-ups just because the communication that goes back and forth is so uplifting to so many.

Because of the relationships and how he conducts himself, his level of professionalism, Fish is respected within the business community, the Native community, and by the political types. He has become viewed as one of these guys—if you want to talk about proposals where you are looking to bring Republicans and Democrats together, Fish is there. Fish is part of those discussions.

He is engaged with the bipartisan chiefs. He works to build those relationships across the aisle—not because he is looking for something but because he knows that is how we are going to get something done. And when we can get something done that benefits Alaska, it is ultimately going to benefit all.

He is a brilliant thinker—I mean, just a brilliant thinker with a strategic mind. He is one of these guys who can come up with things that I swear nobody else has thought about.

I was reading an article—this is something that was published a few years ago by a former teacher and mentor of his from college, and this is from Lynn Paulson. It provides a quote from Fish talking about his educational background at Alaska Pacific University. He said: I have learned to think strategically in a way that is unique and invaluable and has allowed me to do anything, from developing financing for renewable energy programs to negotiating multibillion-dollar deals.

Lynn Paulson goes on to say that Fish "has the temperament to be in the middle of this highly charged and polarized arena and to emerge unruffled . . . supremely well informed and his trenchant logic." These are words that others have used to describe him.

But when I think about how Fish will take an idea—whether it was from a constituent when we were working on the 2017 tax bill—and provide assistance to our Native corporations to be able to better utilize their resources, really brainstorming to come up with what we now have in law that we refer to as settlement trusts—Fish is one of those individuals who—you know his mind is just on fire all the time. But he doesn't present as "I have the best idea, and you need to listen to me." He takes the good from so many. He builds and uplifts and empowers, and that is good leadership. That is management.

Fish gets frustrated every now and again because not everybody communicates the way he does. Not everybody is a relationship builder. And he will say: Pick up the phone. Just go talk to the person. This building isn't that big. Put your device aside. Don't send a text. Get up from your desk, and go across and talk.

That may be old school, but let me tell you, it has worked extraordinarily well for this man.

I mentioned that Fish's passion is fishing; thus the name. He likes to spend a lot of quiet time on the river just out where it is cold and it is clear, or it is wet and you are with the water and you are with the fish, and I think it gives him a lot of time to do some just deep, deep thinking. He collects his thoughts. He is able to process and to really dream. So when he comes back to the real world where it is busy and loud, he has this reserve within him that he draws on, and it helps. It helps him present these ideas and the vision that he is able to articulate.

But like all good Alaskans, we seem to find our way back home, like a salmon returning to its stream. And Fish is going to be returning. I have no doubt he will continue to do great things for the people he loves, and I think he knows that we love him and will miss him, as we will miss Brian Hughes and as we will miss so many great colleagues who will be leaving us at the end of this year. I have taken time on the floor today to recognize some of those individuals who make us as Members stronger and better able to do the jobs we do.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, here is where we are: Conversations are still underway and making progress on the major pandemic relief package we have all been seeking for the American people.

As I have been saying, families across the Nation have waited far too long already for another significant dose of assistance. We must not slide into treating these talks like routine negotiations to be conducted at Congress's routine pace.

So we need to complete this work, and we need to complete it right away. That is what I have said. The Senate is not going anywhere until we have COVID relief out the door. We are staying right here until COVID relief is out the door.

In the meantime, we are going to stay productive while these negotiations are going on. So for the information of all of my colleagues, we should expect continued votes on nominations throughout the weekend. We will continue accomplishing other aspects of the people's business—confirming well-qualified nominees to important posts—until we can act on the major rescue package the American people deserve.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 895.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Thompson Michael Dietz, of New Jersey, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Thompson Michael Dietz, of New Jersey, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mitch McConnell, Chuck Grassley, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, John Cornyn, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Steve Daines, Mike Lee, Ron Johnson, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Pat Roberts, Cory Gardner, Tom Cotton, John Boozman, John Hoeven, Lindsey Graham.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 712.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of John Chase Johnson, of Oklahoma, to be Inspector General, Federal Communications Commission. (New Position)

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of John Chase Johnson, of Oklahoma, to be Inspector General, Federal Communications Commission. (New Position)

Mitch McConnell, Lamar Alexander, Rick Scott, Tom Cotton, Mike Crapo, Cory Gardner, Ron Johnson, James Lankford, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Thom Tillis, Shelley Moore Capito, John Boozman, Joni Ernst, Mike Braun, Pat Roberts.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 904.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Eric J. Soskin, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, Department of Transportation.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby

move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Eric J. Soskin, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, Department of Transportation.

Mitch McConnell, Lamar Alexander, Rick Scott, Tom Cotton, Mike Crapo, Cory Gardner, Ron Johnson, James Lankford, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Thom Tillis, Shelley Moore Capito, John Boozman, Joni Ernst, Mike Braun, Pat Roberts.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 757.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Beth Harwell, of Tennessee, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2024.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Beth Harwell, of Tennessee, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2024.

Mitch McConnell, Lamar Alexander, Rick Scott, Tom Cotton, Mike Crapo, Cory Gardner, Ron Johnson, James Lankford, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Thom Tillis, Shelley Moore Capito, John Boozman, Joni Ernst, Mike Braun, Pat Roberts.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 758.